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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/631,638	08/02/2000	Kevin M. Moore	1533.0980001/SRL/PAJ	8662
26111	7590	11/19/2003	EXAMINER	
STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX PLLC			NAFF, DAVID M	
1100 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.			ART UNIT	
WASHINGTON, DC 20005			PAPER NUMBER	

1651

DATE MAILED: 11/19/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/631,638

Applicant(s)

MOORE ET AL.

Examiner

David M. Naff

Art Unit

1651

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 August 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 5-7, 9-17 and 21-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 5-7, 9-17 and 21-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 8/24/03 6) ☐ Other: _____

The response of 8/20/03 presented arguments and a 132 Declaration of Kevin M. Moore.

Claims examined on the merits are 1, 5-7, 9-17 and 21-31 which are all claims in the application.

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 5-7, 9-17 and 21-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dumpelmann et al (5,852,211) in view of Bott et al (0 174 624) for the type of reasons set forth in the previous office action of 5/20/03, and for reasons herein.

The claims are drawn to recovery of an organic acid from a fermentation broth by drying the broth without prior removal of insolubles from the broth to produce a dried product, adding the dried product to a lower alcohol in the presence of an acid and removing insolubles by to obtain the organic acid. The organic acid can be 2-keto-L-gulonic acid and the acid present when the dry product is added to the lower alcohol can be sulphuric acid.

Dumpelmann et al disclose a process for obtaining 2-keto-L-gulonic acid (KGA) from a fermentation solution containing the sodium salt of 2-keto-L-gulonic acid (NaKGA) that results from neutralization. The process involves crystallizing the sodium

salt (NaKGA) and separating the resulting crystals from the fermentation solution, suspending the NaKGA crystals in a lower alcohol acidified to a pH of about 1.5 to about 3.5 with an acid such as sulphuric acid where the acid is converted to an insoluble sodium salt and the NaKGA is converted to free KGA, and removing the insoluble sodium salt of the acid to obtain an alcoholic solution of the KGA. Afterwards, the free KGA may be esterified by alcohol of the alcoholic solution in the presence of a catalytic amount of acid to obtain an alkyl ester of the KGA. For example, see col 4, lines 10-33, and Examples 1-3.

Bott et al disclose producing alkyl lactate esters by filtering a crude fermentation mixture containing calcium lactate, spray drying the resulting filtrate to obtain solid calcium lactate, reacting the solid calcium lactate with an alcohol in the presence of an acid that forms a water-soluble calcium salt and isolating the lactic acid ester formed.

It would have been obvious to omit crystallizing NaKGA in the process of Dumpelmann et al and instead dry the fermentation broth and react the dried broth with the lower alcohol in the presence of acid as suggested by Bott et al using steps of drying a fermentation solution without crystallizing in the production of a lactic acid ester from a fermentation mixture containing a calcium salt of the lactic acid. Drying without

crystallizing would have been expected to simplify the process of Dumpelmann et al, and such simplification would have been motivation to use drying in place of crystallizing and separating the crystals. While Bott et al filters the fermentation broth, it would have been obvious to omit filtering to further simplify. There is seen nothing to lead one to believe that the reacting of NaKGA as disclosed by Bott et al cannot occur in an unfiltered fermentation broth.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments and 132 Declaration filed 8/20/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants point out that claims 1 and 17 now exclude the removal of insolubles prior to the drying of the fermentation broth.

Applicants and the declaration urge that Bott et al teach away from not filtering since the process will not work in the presence of biomass. However, the present claims do not exclude biomass being present since the broth prior to step (a) could be filter to remove biomass.

The fact that Bott et al was published 13 years before filing of the present application does not make the invention unobvious since the period of 13 years before filing could have been for reasons other than the invention being unobvious.

There is no evidence that persons have attempted the invention and failed.

Additionally, while not removing solubles is disclosed in the specification (page 7, lines 19-20), the specification also discloses (page 7, lines 3-18) that preferred embodiments involve partial or at least 90% removal of insolubles before drying, and Examples 2-4 show removing insolubles before drying. Therefore, it is apparent that not removing insolubles is non-critical, and is an alternative to preferred embodiments of removing insolubles.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

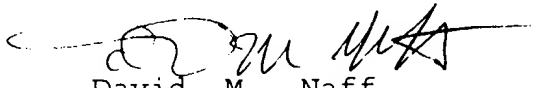
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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David M. Naff whose telephone number is 703-308-0520. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mike Wityshyn can be reached on 703-308-4743. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.


David M. Naff
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1651

DMN
11/17/03